Offices of the Dean of Student Life
Student Assistance Services
**Student Experience Assessment**
2020 - 2021

Purpose of Assessment

Student Assistance Services is one of the units in the Offices of the Dean of Student Life. According to its website (https://studentlife.tamu.edu/sas/), Student Assistance Services (SAS) "seeks to connect Texas A&M University students with the appropriate guidance, resources, and support to address a variety of personal and academic matters." Students are often referred to Student Assistance Services for a variety of reasons such as concerning behavior, student death, sexual violence, withdrawal from school, student welfare checks, and general consultation. Student Assistance Services wanted to gather feedback on the experience of students who meet with staff in their office. This is the third time this assessment project has been conducted.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified some key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, Student Assistance Services staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the students they serve. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- The NPS® is an index ranging from -100 to +100 and measures the willingness of someone to recommend a product or service to others. Given the NPS® range of -100 to +100, generally, a score above zero is considered good, scores above 50 are considered great, and scores above 70 are world-class. Students rated Student Assistance Services at a Net Promoter Score® of +50.6. Additionally, 84% of students said they were likely to reach back out to SAS for help.
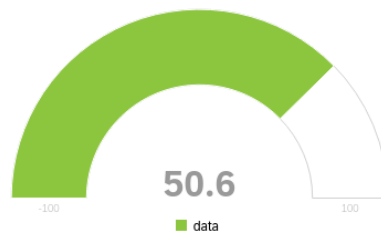
- Students were generally positive regarding their experience with Student Assistance Services. A vast majority of the students (86% or higher) reported that SAS listened to them, was approachable, provided helpful information, helped them navigate their situation, and overall were satisfied with their experience.

- Some students had a less satisfying experience engaging with Student Assistance Services; however, they did not provide specific suggestions of what they would have wanted in their interactions with the department. Those who did seemed to want something that SAS does not provide or expressed their frustration about the situation they met with SAS to discuss.
    - If not already doing so, Student Assistance Services may explore ways to discuss expectations with students in terms of what they expect from Student Assistance Services and then, as needed, have discussions about managing those expectations.

- Student Assistance Services has an impact on the students they serve. Almost three-fourths of students (73%) self-reported they could identify at least one resource after meeting with SAS. Furthermore, 70% of students reported actually utilizing or planning to use a resource they learned about when meeting with SAS. However, both of these decreased slightly when compared to the last two years.

Method and Sample

An electronic survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. The 20-question survey contained 13 quantitative questions and seven qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw every question. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

The electronic survey link was sent to students who met with a staff member from Student Assistance Services approximately one week after their appointment. Surveys were sent approximately once a week from August 17, 2020, through May 26, 2021, to 539 students; however, one email address was a duplicate because the student met with SAS twice during the year; this student only received the survey invitation once. Up to two reminders were sent to non-respondents before the survey closed in July 2021. Of the 538 students receiving the survey invitation, 91 completed some part of the survey, yielding a 17% response rate, which is 7% lower than last year.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending order for 2020-2021 mean or frequency percentages. Summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the entire list of responses can be found in a separate document. Comparisons to previous years will be made where appropriate.

Students were asked about how their appointment with Student Assistance Services (SAS) was scheduled. Table 1 indicated that just over half of the students came to SAS through a referral. Those selecting "something else" (n=2) were provided the opportunity to specify who referred them and two wrote a comment sharing that a professor and Aggie Helpline referred them to SAS.

Which best describes how your appointment with Student Assistance Services was scheduled?	2020-2021 Percentage [n=87]	2019-2020 Percentage [n=209]
I was referred by someone else	53%	44%
I was contacted directly by Student Assistance Services	31%	38%
I found Student Assistance Services on my own	14%	18%
Something else	2%	*

Table 1: Reached Student Assistance Services
*Question not asked

Students who were referred to SAS by someone else (n=46) were asked to identify who referred them through a select all that apply formatted question. Table 2, on the following page, shows that students referred to Student Assistance Service came from an advisor or a faculty member the most. Those selecting the "someone else" option (n=10) had the opportunity to write who referred them and all 10 wrote something. Those mentioned included their doctor (two specifically indicated at Beutel), Financial Aid Office, Student Conduct Office, Department of Civil Rights and Equity Investigations (CREI), and a friend or family member.

Who referred you to Student Assistance Services? (select all that apply)	2020-2021 Percentage [n=52]	2019-2020 Percentage [n=209]
Advisor	28%	19%
Faculty/Professor	26%	21%
Someone Else	22%	16%
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)	20%	32%
Friend/Classmate	9%	9%
Family Member	4%	10%
Disability Resources	2%	2%
GLBTQ+ Pride Center	2%	1%
12th Can	--	2%

Table 2: Referrals

Students were asked if they were able to identify at least one supportive university and/or community resource that they could utilize after they met with Student Assistance Services. Table 3 demonstrates that almost three-fourths of students could identify at least one resource. Those indicating they could identify a resource (n=59) were provided the opportunity to list that resource and all 59 students shared a wide range of resources. Over one-third of students reported that they could utilize Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Other resources mentioned included the food bank or 12th Can, academic advising or professors, Disability Resources, Financial Aid, Student Assistance Services, and Student Health Services.

Can you identify at least one supportive university and/or community resource that you can utilize after meeting with Student Assistance Services?	2020-2021 Percentage [n=81]	2019-2020 Percentage [n=62]	2018-2019 Percentage [n=109]
Yes	73%	76%	85%
No	27%	24%	15%

Table 3: Learn About Resources

When asked if they actually had utilized at least one resource that they learned about since meeting with Student Assistance Services, almost half reported they had used at least one resource as seen in Table 4.

Have you utilized at least one resource since meeting with Student Assistance Services?	2020-2021 Percentage [n=84]	2019-2020 Percentage [n=62]	2018-2019 Percentage [n=115]
Yes	46%	63%	70%
Not yet, but planning to	24%	*	*
No	16%	37%	30%
No, it was not needed	14%	*	*

Table 4: Utilized Resources
*Question not asked

Students indicating they had not utilized a resource (n=13) were asked a follow-up question to share what had prevented them from utilizing a suggested resource(s). The most common response from nine students were that they felt they did not need additional resources. Other reasons shared included having a busy schedule, not having any resources suggested to them, feeling it was too late, and receiving help from SAS.

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with their experience with Student Assistance Services. Table 5, on the following page, demonstrates that students generally agreed with all statements.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	20-21 Mean (sd) [n=84]	19-20 Mean (sd) [n=58]	18-19 Mean (sd) [n=114]
The staff member listened to me during our meeting.	82%	13%	1%	1%	2%	4.71 (.77)	*	*
The staff member was approachable during our meeting.	83%	11%	1%	2%	2%	4.70 (.82)	*	*
The staff member provided helpful information regarding my situation.	75%	13%	7%	2%	2%	4.56 (.91)	*	*
The staff member helped me navigate the situation I was going through.	73%	13%	10%	2%	2%	4.51 (.94)	*	*
Overall, I am satisfied with my experience with Student Assistance Services.	76%	12%	4%	4%	5%	4.51 (1.06)	4.36 (1.06)	4.38 (.93)

Table 5: Student Experience
*Question not asked

A follow-up question asked students who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the statements what would have improved their experience. Five students wrote a response and shared very different experiences. One student felt they were interrogated about their past. Another felt confronted after being "tattled" on by a friend and that the counselor did not help her. One student suggested reaching out more often to students. One did not feel like they received help when the options provided to them was to Q-Drop a class or take an Incomplete. The last student wanted SAS to identify the person who tried to run them over and to respond to the racial or anti-immigrant microaggressions they had reported.

Table 6 displays the results when respondents were asked about the impact of meeting with SAS. Students were mostly in agreement with both statements. When disaggregating the results International, Asian, doctoral, Engineering, Business, and Agricultural students were slightly less in agreement that they could make a more informed decision to navigate their situation. All disaggregated results can be found in separate documents. As a reference to previous years, the question asking students if SAS helped them continue their enrollment was a yes/no question. In 2019-2020, 81% of the respondents said yes, which was similar to the 79% in 2018-2019.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	20-21 Mean (sd) [n]	19-20 Mean (sd) [n=58]	18-19 Mean (sd) [n=114]
After meeting with Student Assistance Services, I was able to make more informed decisions on how to navigate my current situation.	57%	23%	16%	4%	1%	4.31 (.94) [84]	4.14 (1.02)	4.25 (.97)
Student Assistance Services has helped me continue my enrollment at Texas A&M University.	56%	16%	20%	4%	5%	4.15 (1.16) [82]	*	*

Table 6: Impact on Students (*Question not asked)

Students reporting that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to make more informed decisions to navigate their situation (n=67) were asked what they had done to navigate their situation. Several response options were shared from the 47 students who wrote a comment. The two most common actions students reported were that they had talked with faculty members or contacted a necessary office or resource. Some talked about taking a step back by dropping a class or withdrawing from the university. Others discussed how they are focusing on their classes and their grades. A few mentioned talking with friends and staying connected with others.

All students were provided the opportunity to explain how SAS has or has not helped students continue in their enrollment and 39 wrote comments. Those who said Student Assistance Services helped them continue their enrollment shared positive comments about the office and individual staff members. Students stated that SAS helped them improve their financial situation, provided them resources and hope to finish the semester, and assisted in working with professors. Some of those who said Student Assistance Services did not help them continue their enrollment indicated that they are having difficulty getting work done in their classes and that they wanted to leave the institution. One person shared they were angry a friend refer them to Student Assistance Services.

Students were asked about their likelihood or unlikelihood to contact Student Assistance Services in the future. Table 7 indicates that similar to last year, students reported a high likelihood of going back to Student Assistance Services for help if needed while at Texas A&M. In looking at the data disaggregated by demographics, White, sophomore and junior students were slightly less likely to reach out to SAS for help in the future. All disaggregated results can be found in separate documents.

	Very Likely (5)	Likely (4)	Neutral (3)	Unlikely (2)	Very Unlikely (1)	20-21 Mean (sd) [n=84]	19-20 Mean (sd) [n=58]	18-19 Mean (sd) [n=110]
How likely are you to reach out to Student Assistance Services for help with issues that may arise during your time at A&M?	60%	24%	10%	6%	1%	4.35 (.96)	4.28 (1.11)	4.26 (1.05)

Table 7: Return to Student Assistance Services

Students stating they were unlikely or very unlikely to reach out to Student Assistance Services for help with issues that may arise (n=6) were asked a follow-up question about what would prevent them from contacting Student Assistance Services. Of the four comments, a couple of students felt that going to Student Assistance Services did not help the situation or that the options provided were not practical. One student indicated they could handle their situation on their own and did not need help. The last student shared that the reports they submitted were not addressed and that they believe the university is covering things up.

The NPS® is an index ranging from -100 to +100 and measures the willingness of someone to recommend a product or service to others. Using a Net Promoter Score® (NPS®) question, students were asked how likely they were to refer their friends or peers to Student Assistance Services. Respondents were given the options of zero to 10 with 10 being most likely to recommend SAS to others. Scores of nine or ten are promoters, scores of seven or eight are passives, and scores of six and below are detractors. The NPS® is determined by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. Given the NPS® range of -100 to +100, generally, a score above zero is considered good, scores above 50 are considered great, and scores above 70 are world-class. As can be seen in Figure 1 on the following page, the Net Promoter Score® for SAS was +50.6.
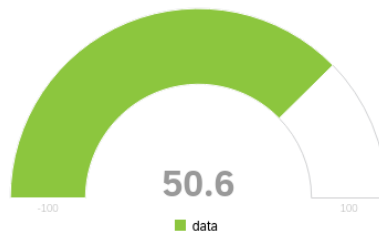
Figure 1: Net Promoter Score®

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of promoters, passives, and detractors. Just over two-thirds of the students responding were promoters.   Additionally, Table 8 on the following page provides a more detailed breakdown of the Net Promoter Score® and reveals that almost two-thirds (64%) of the respondents rated recommending SAS at 10.
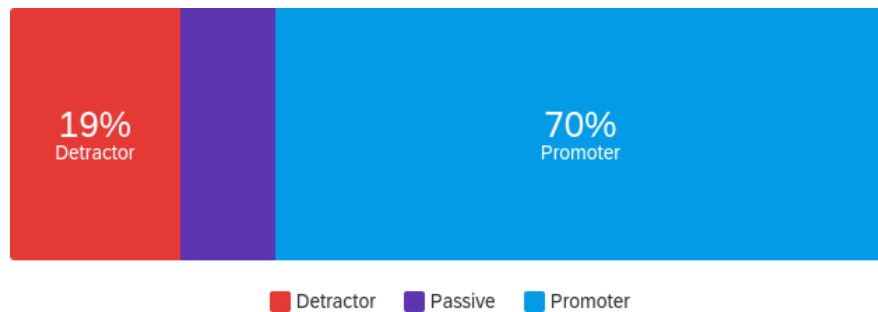

Figure 2: Breakdown of Net Promoter Score®

Net Promoter Score		Frequency Percentage [n=83]
Promoter	10	64%
	9	6%
Passive	8	5%
	7	6%
Detractor	6	6%
	5	5%
	4	4%
	3	2%
	2	1%
	1	--
	0	1%

Table 8: Breakdown for the Net Promoter Score®

Additionally, students were provided the opportunity to explain their zero to 10 ratings. Promoters (those rating a nine or 10) described SAS as approachable, helpful, understanding, caring, and kind. Students commented on staff members listening to them and providing information or resources. Several students indicated they had already referred friends to Student Assistance Services. Passives (those rating SAS a seven or eight) said it would depend on the friend or the situation. Some said they might refer students to SAS or other resources on campus. Detractors (those rating between a six and zero) shared that they do not like to talk about their problems to strangers or to talk about their problems in general. One student felt that their previous reports were not taken seriously and that the university was covering something up.

The final question gave students the opportunity to write anything else they would like to share with Student Assistance Services to help improve the student experience. Almost half of the 27 comments were praises for Student Assistance Services and individual staff members. Students described SAS as helpful, amazing, informative, responsive, and encouraging. There were a few suggestions or things students indicated they would like including responding sooner, letting students know when their case manager will be gone for an extended period, and advertising their services more for other students. One student thought it would be helpful to focus communication to graduate students about their stress and working with their faculty advisor. Another student felt that SAS should work more with faculty and senior-level administrators to have better programs to mitigate racial or anti-immigrant microaggressions that have been reported. Two students shared their experience with the same situation with one student reporting the other student. The student who was reported was very angry about what happened, which led to the student who did the reporting to feel that SAS was not helpful.

Student Assistance Services provided the University Identification Numbers (UINs) of students who were sent the survey. The UINs were used to gather demographic information from the university student database. The demographic information for all the students the survey was sent to and those who responded can be found in Table 9, on the following page in descending order for the survey respondents for each category. Duplicated UINs for students who interacted with SAS multiple times were removed and only counted once. Many demographic categories were similar for those receiving the survey and those completing the survey with a few exceptions. There were fewer freshmen, male, white students, and students in the colleges of Liberal Arts and General Studies responding to the survey than received the survey. Alternatively, more masters, female, International students, and students from the colleges of Education and Human Development and Sciences responded to the survey.

	Survey Sent [n=497]	Respondents [n=89]
Classification		
Senior	29%	30%
Junior	30%	28%
Freshman	19%	12%
Sophomore	13%	12%
Masters	4%	9%
Doctoral	3%	7%
Nondegree	1%	1%
Pharmacy / Vet School	1%	--
College		
Engineering	28%	25%
Education and Human Development	11%	16%
Liberal Arts	21%	15%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	12%	14%
Science	4%	10%
Architecture	5%	5%
Veterinary Medicine	4%	5%
Bush School of Government	1%	3%
Mays Business School	5%	3%
Geosciences	2%	2%
Public Health/Pharmacy/Nursing	3%	2%
Galveston	1%	1%
General Studies	4%	--
Sex		
Female	55%	67%
Male	45%	33%
Ethnicity		
White	47%	37%
Hispanic or Latino	27%	27%
Black or Multi-Racial with Black	8%	12%
International	4%	10%
Asian	9%	9%
Multi-Racial (excluding Black)	4%	3%
Unknown or Not Reported	<1%	1%
First Generation Status		
Not First Generation	61%	52%
First Generation	31%	33%
Unknown	8%	16%
Top 10 Percent Status		
Not Top 10%	66%	61%
Top 10%	34%	39%
Campus		
College Station	96%	98%
Health Science Center / Galveston	4%	2%

Table 9: Student Demographics

Department Background

According to its website (https://studentlife.tamu.edu/), the Offices of the Dean of Student Life "strive to enhance your opportunities as a student to participate fully in the University experience." The department does this through sharing information, services, programs, and involvement opportunities. Student Assistance Services is one of several program areas in the department. While each area has a specific mission and function, they all have the common goal to provide education, outreach, and support to students.

Student Life Studies and Project Details

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/. Additionally, division staff and students can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/.